



2019 Admissions Round Feedback

Modern Languages and joint schools

Please note this is subject admissions feedback from the 2019 selection round - there will be changes each year, and these pages are only retained to provide a general indication of process.

The College made 10 offers for entry in October 2020, in Modern Languages and joint schools with Modern Languages (English, History, Philosophy). Only one candidate had applied for deferred entry, though such applications are welcome and are considered sympathetically. They can be especially beneficial for modern linguists if candidates aim to spend the intervening time using their language (or languages) in appropriate countries.

The College considered a total of 27 first-choice applications in Modern Languages and joint schools with Modern Languages. Most of these had originally applied to the College; two had been reallocated to Keble by oversubscribed colleges, and two were invited to Keble to be interviewed for a place in a subject or combination of subjects which was not the one for which they had originally applied. In addition to these candidates, the College interviewed a further 13 candidates who had already been interviewed by a different first-choice college. Four of the first-choice applicants were not invited to interview (typical reasons for this being, for example, less good public examinations results or predictions, or less good performance in the History Aptitude Test, English Literature Aptitude Test, and/or Language Grammar Tests). Four of the Keble candidates were interviewed by other colleges.

Candidates offered various combinations of French, Italian, Spanish, Linguistics, English, History and Philosophy, as well as sole languages. The College has no quotas for specific languages or combinations, aiming to take those candidates who are best qualified and show most potential. All first-choice candidates who were invited to interview received a letter explaining that they should give thought to any other combinations they might be willing to be considered for and were asked on arrival to indicate these (if any) on a form. All candidates were considered primarily for combinations they had applied for, but in the case of a few candidates, other combinations were considered.

Candidates received at least two interviews at Keble. With the exception of candidates applying for Italian ab-initio, candidates, in language interviews, were asked questions in the target language on subjects related to the personal statement in the UCAS form; they were also asked questions (in English) designed to test their conceptual grasp of, and ability to manipulate, basic grammar and syntax. Candidates were given a short literary passage (variously verse or prose) to prepare half an hour before their interview (in French and Spanish in the case of French and Spanish candidates; in English in the case of Italian candidates) and were asked questions designed to test their comprehension and their observation of detail and form. Candidates for Linguistics were given exercises testing their potential for understanding linguistic concepts. A key aim of all interviews was to assess the degree of engagement, observation, rigour and precision with which candidates approached matters of language usage. This assessment was important in deciding which candidates should be offered places, but was considered alongside the results of the written tests and the information available on the UCAS forms.

10 offers were made: 1 to a candidate from overseas, 6 to candidates from state schools, 3 to candidates from independent schools. Of the 10 offers, four were to candidates who had been interviewed first by another college. One offer was made for a combination for which the candidate had not originally applied (e.g. a candidate for English and French being offered a place for French and beginner's Italian). Offers were made in the joint schools with English (1), History (1), Philosophy (2) and Linguistics (2), as well a sole- and two-language options within the main school of Modern Languages. One candidate was offered a place at another college.

Candidates are reminded that there is no absolute standard for entry. Admission is competitive and often entails good and promising candidates not securing offers owing to the strength of the competition. Care was taken to make fine distinctions between candidates on the basis of all the information that the admissions process offers the College. The field of applicants this year was good and every effort was made to secure interviews at other colleges for strong candidates to whom Keble was not able to make an offer, though even so it proved impossible to place some deserving candidates.